

Message Text

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64

ACTION NEA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SCCT-01 OPR-01 SCA-01 A-01 CIAE-00

INR-07 NSAE-00 DODE-00 SY-04 SCS-03 PPT-01 L-02 /031 W

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R 181615Z FEB 75

FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

TO AMEMBASSY ANKARA

INFO SECSTATE WASHDC 2925

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E.O. 11652: N/A DECON 2-18-76

TAGS: CPAS CASC TU

SUBJECT: TRAVEL TO LEBANON

REF: ANKARA 1233 (NOTAL)

1. EMBASSY DOES NOT BELIEVE SITUATION IN BEIRUT OR LEBANON WARRANTS DISCOURAGING AMERICAN MILITARY FROM TOURIST TRAVEL TO LEBANON. THE INCIDENT REFERRED TO IN REFTEL OCCURRED SHORTLY AFTER THE PLO HEADQUARTERS IN BEIRUT WAS ROCKETED BY UNKNOWN ELEMENTS. SUBSEQUENT INVESTIGATION CONVINCED GOL THAT PERPETRATORS OF BOMBING ENTERED LEBANON FALSE PASSPORTS OF EUROPEAN COUNTRIES. CONSEQUENTLY, BOTH THE LEBANESE AUTHORITIES AND THE PLO WERE PARTICULARLY NERVOUS WITH REGARD TO FOREIGNERS WANDERING INTO SENSITIVE AREAS DURING THE PERIOD IMMEDIATELY THEREAFTER AND WE HAD A NUMBER OF INCIDENTS INCLUDING THE ONE REFERRED TO IN REFTEL. IN MOST CASES THE AMERICANS DETAINED HAD INADVERTENTLY STRAYED INTO AREAS WHICH THE EMBASSY, HAD IT KNOWN, WOULD HAVE ADVISED AGAINST. WE HAVE HAD PRACTICALLY NO CHASE SINCE.

2. ON THE BASIS OF INFORMATION WE HAVE AT THE MOMENT, WE DO NOT THINK THAT PALESTINIAN ELEMENTS ARE INTENTIONALLY HARRASSING AMERICAN VISITORS. WE CANNOT, OF COURSE, PRECLUDE THAT INCIDENTS WILL NOT OCCUR IN THE FUTURE BUT WE THINK THAT THE SITUATION IS OF A NATURE WHERE THE RISK IS ACCEPTABLE. IN FACT, MOST OF THE TOURIST SITES ARE IN SAFE AREAS.

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3. CONSEQUENTLY, WE DO NOT RPT NOT BELIEVE US MILITARY NEED BE
DISCOURAGED FROM COMING TO BEIRUT PROVIDED THEY EXERCISE
PRUDENCE AND OBTAIN A SECURITY BRIEFING FROM THE EMBASSY BEFORE
THEY ATTEMPT TO TRAVEL AROUND THE CITY OR WITHIN THE COUNTRY.
IF THEY COME WITH AN ORGANIZED TOUR, IT WOULD BE PRUDENT IN
INTEREST OF SECURITY TO REMAIN WITH THE TOUR GROUP.
HOUGHTON

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